THE GOLDEN HORIZON

Cyril Connolly

WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON

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EDITED TOGETHER WITH
AN INTRODUCTION
BY
CYRIL CONNOLLY

LONDON
WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON
LIMITED

First published 1953

To SONIA BROWNELL

PRINTED IN ENGLAND AT THE CURWEN PRESS

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INTRODUCTION

BETWEEN Christmas 1939 and New Year 1950, *Horizon* ran to some ten thousand pages: the purpose of this anthology has been to select six hundred. This could have been made possible only by inventing certain rules and keeping strictly to them. Since the plates which illustrated our Art articles no longer exist, it was decided that Art must go; and Art included painting, sculpture, the cinema and architecture—and music too. The first rule, then, was 'Literature only'. Now no magazine can rise superior to the judgement of its editor, and, looking back, I felt that I could not always trust myself where articles on philosophy and psychology were concerned, or politics and economics; they might not be the best of their kind; they might be obsolete, and, in any case, they are difficult to mix. So are reports on places, which are apt to date; and in the end, therefore, I was left with stories, poems, reportage and literary essays from which to make a selection. One more rule: to avoid essays and stories which have become well known through being reprinted, like the work of Arturo Barea, Elizabeth Bowen, E. M. Forster, Anna Kavan, Arthur Koestler, George Orwell, Sir Osbert Sitwell, Martin Turnell, Lionel Trilling and Evelyn Waugh. And one final rule: to avoid contributions which have been translated from other magazines, or long critical essays which are in reality glorified book reviews—and not to include articles on living writers whose subsequent work may have belied them.

This made a large dent in ten thousand pages and the question of arrangement then arose. It seemed in retrospect that *Horizon* had enjoyed three moments of historical importance. The first was at the beginning of the last war when it served as a rallying point where writers might clear their minds and pool their experiences. From 1939–41 Stephen Spender was a co-editor and it was due largely to him that we printed such good war poetry and such intelligent articles about war aims; on the other hand *Horizon* at that time manifested a tendency to become a Left-wing 'school magazine' with a rather naïve attitude to other writers. This complacency was dispelled by Orwell: 'In the last twenty years,' he wrote, 'Western civilization has given the Intellectual security without responsibility

and in England, in particular, it has educated him in scepticism while anchoring him almost immovably in the privileged class. He has been in the position of a young man living on an allowance from a father whom he hates. The result is a deep feeling of guilt and resentment, not combined with any genuine desire to escape.'

In the next phase we undertook a stock-taking of Western culture under pressure in the two long series, 'Novelist-Philosophers' and 'Studies in Genius', and the magazine came genuinely to represent Western Literature, past and present, and so was able to carry abroad an international humanist warmth and curiosity in the wake of the invading armies. This was the second historical moment. Thus, Occupied France had always been something of an obsession, the stricken Paris of Pierre Jean Jouve's wonderful poem:

> Ville atroce, O capitale de mes journées
> O ville infortunée, livrée aux âmes basses!

We obtained some of the first accounts of the underground movements and, when the city was liberated, we were fortunate to receive a first impression of its literary activities which came with the force of a discovery. 'In the literature of these four years', wrote Philip Toynbee (September 1944), 'France has been incomparable and undeniably superior.' Articles about Italian literature, new German writing, and recent Greek poetry followed, even as *Horizon* was bringing news of English culture to these countries. (A special edition in French on English literature during the war sold 10,000 copies.) The last historical moment was one not of advance but of retreat, retreat into an aesthetic puritanism which refused to be misled by optimistic estimates of the benefits which would accrue to art from a welfare State or a divided Europe, or even from the comings and goings of air-minded culture diffusionists. This phase of consolidation has naturally less to show for itself than the two others, although the association with our fellow dissidents in America from 1946 onwards was highly rewarding.

In this anthology, '*Horizon's* History of the War' illustrates those historical moments when literature seemed to follow life like a barge on a quiet canal towed by a madman on a motor-cycle. The 'History of the War' is impressionistic and is intended to re-create a chain of moods by an interlocking arrangement of poems and reportage. Thus Spender's 'September Journal' recalls not only the

first innocent days of the war, but the innocent Germany of the Weimar Republic as evoked by the youthful poet in the image of his friend Curtius—the father lost. At the end of the war section we see an older Spender, a veteran war artist in words, revisiting 'C.' in this same Germany—a 'father found' who has altered almost as unrecognizably as his disciple. The two extracts are intended to mark the passage of time, even as Bertrand Russell's article is, alas, a realistic post-war answer to H. G. Wells's pre-war optimism and the almost affectionate 'Message from Moscow'; or as Sartre's 'Case for Responsible Literature' is put into true perspective by being shown in its 'Resistance' context.

The 'Entertainments' that follow are animated by the straightforward desire to please without which any magazine must founder; we begin with the serene atmosphere of two writers of the pre-1914 generation, and continue with a brilliant parody of science fiction and Soviet dog experiments, followed by a run of disturbing stories about Schizoids whose heroes seem to fulfil Rudolph Friedman's description, 'The intellectual type of today can most often be represented by a tall, slightly stooping figure, with the skin drawn tightly across the cheek bones, the pale sadistic lips desiring to cut to pieces even as they utter, the eyes attempting to reproduce the severe and compelling gaze of the father and yet at the same time strangely powerless and watering with the pathos of the son slowly moving out of life.'

The excitable narrator of 'The Moment of Truth' would seem their feminine counterpart, and so I have included Arthur Waley's masterpiece, 'Mrs. White', to prove that *Horizon* could always publish a story about normal people—before Hermann Hesse (who since has won the Nobel Prize) magically closes the Schizoid Cycle.

'Glimpses of Greatness' is a section which was all the time forming without our being aware of it, a carillon of memories covering a recurring situation, the Maestro in all his simplicity and wisdom garrulously confronting his treacherous dumb disciple. The Princess Edmond de Polignac was blown to our shores (as in 1870 and 1914) by the gale of the world, like some splendid sun-fish, and her reminiscences—the only literary utterance of this great lady of the nineteenth century who was also a patron of the most advanced music of the twentieth—were put in order by Raymond Mortimer

and now take their place in this gallery of living portraits on which the dust of contemporary indifference is already settling.

'Personal Anthology' contain the two dozen poems that I like the best and the choice is quite irrational. Thus I enjoy Brian Reed's 'Girl Dozing' because it reminds me of an early Passmore, Rexroth because I admire Chinese poetry, 'The Half of Life' because (like Hoelderlin) I was thirty-five when I read it, and there is also some American poetry included for its streamlined formal perfection.

A 'Prospect of Literature' is the section which has been most amputated by reprintings. I would have liked to have made a whole volume of these long essays which were the core of the magazine and which cover most of the outstanding writers of England and France, but I have had to confine myself to the best which have not been reprinted. The first four are humanist appreciations, while the 'Notes for an Estimate of Peacock' is a good example of Marxist criticism, the Beddoes almost Existentialist, and the Svevo alive with awareness of Freud. Indeed Lionel Trilling's 'Freud and Literature' (*Horizon*, 92) can be imagined as terminating the series which should have included Graham Hough's 'George Eliot' and Martin Turnell's 'Baudelaire'.

I hope that all these sections can be read straight through like so many short books and will give pleasure to readers who have never heard of the magazine, though I cannot myself contemplate the selection without a pang for so much that has been omitted. Another volume for the Arts and Sciences, the 'Places' and the Politics, would still not suffice—for how can we recapture, between the covers of a book, the tempo of a monthly review? Editing a magazine is a form of the good life; it is creating when the world is destroying, helping where it is hindering; being given once a month the opportunity to produce a perfect number and every month failing, and just when despair sets in, being presented with one more chance. Plop! The afternoon post falls on the carpet, the letter-box becomes a periscope on the outside world, encouragement arrives and fat subscriptions, notices in other magazines, letters from California and Brazil, contributions from all over the world, one of which may have been long awaited and another be totally unexpected and yet just as good. And when each number appears, it carries a faint fragrance of the month when it bloomed, the aroma of transience; of bean flowers or laburnum; of days shortening and the muffin man; of

broken hearts or broken armies; the cup Hemingway brewed the night before D-Day, or the Doodlebug in Bedford Square. In a young fighter-pilot's diary a whole page was found printed in capitals with the words: 'My Story accepted by *Horizon*!' It was his first story and his last, for a few months later 'the Pupil' was killed in the Battle of Tunisia. How can an anthology perpetuate his excitement or convey the depression of the black-out hanging over so many other stories and poems or darkening the animated discussions of the editors?

For the essential feature of *Horizon* was dual control. 'Favourite Daydream' I wrote in 1933, 'to edit a monthly magazine entirely subsidized by self. No advertisements. Harmless title. Deleterious contents.' In 1939 I found my friend Peter Watson was prepared to launch it. At first he wanted to produce an art review in Paris that would replace the *Minotaure*. I thought England's need was greater, and Hitler cast his vote in my favour. Peter Watson's main interests were modern painting and music, mine were literature and psychology, Spender's poetry and politics. We were friends, and so able to forgive each other discrepancies of temperament and even the comments which were repeated by so many other friends; and the key to *Horizon* lies in the Bouvard-Pécuchet relationship between Peter Watson and myself. As Hardy, I emulated his despair, as Laurel, he financed my optimism. He likes art to be slightly incomprehensible, while I fall an easy victim to political quacks and neurotic journalists; he is impressed by straw in the hair, I am taken in by a fire in the belly: we were made to compromise. And so his anthology still remains ungathered, although there are few young painters, composers, or sculptors of whom the world now buzzes whose work was not encouraged in *Horizon's* art pages.

A magazine is greater than those who produce it, and both transcends and transforms them. For many months before *Horizon* appeared we could talk of nothing else: in the warm June sunshine of the Rue du Bac or through crazy summer afternoons in London. I remember holding forth about it to Robert Byron on the August evening at Glenarm when news of the Hitler-Soviet pact came through on the wireless, and a few miles away, at Cushendun, in mutual unawareness, Louis MacNeice was marinating the poems which were later to become the first contributions to our opening number.

C.C.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgement is gratefully made for the use of the following material originally published in *Horizon*

MESSRS. ALLEN & UNWIN for 'Mrs. White' from Arthur Waley's *The Real Tripitaka.*

MESSRS. B. T. BATSFORD for 'From Libyan Diary' from Cecil Beaton's *Near East.*

MESSRS. JONATHAN CAPE for 'Dedicatory Stanzas' (To Stephen Spender) from *Georgics of Virgil* by C. Day Lewis and the article 'Wilde and Conder' from *Chiaroscuro* by Augustus John.

MESSRS. CHATTO AND WINDUS for 'Success' a poem by William Empson.

MESSRS. COLLINS, SONS & CO. for 'The Romantic Catastrophe' from Peter Quennell's *Byron in Italy.*

MESSRS. DENT & SONS for three poems by Dylan Thomas.

MESSRS. FABER & FABER for 'The Rider Victory', a poem by Edwin Muir; 'Sceptre-Struck, Spellbound, Beloved', a poem by George Barker from *News of the World*; 'A Face', a poem by Marianne Moore from *Collected Poems*; two poems by W. H. Auden from *The Age of Anxiety* and *Nones*; two poems by Louis MacNeice, 'Cushendun' and 'The Libertine', and two poems by Stephen Spender, 'O Night O Trembling Night' from *The Edge of Being*, and 'Air Raid'.

MESSRS. HAMISH HAMILTON for 'Belsen' from *Eclipse* by Alan Moorehead.

THE HOGARTH PRESS for William Sansom's story 'Building Alive' and Laurie Lee's poem 'Equinox'.

MESSRS. JOHN LEHMANN for Roy Fuller's poem 'The Divided Life' from *Epitaphs and Occasions* and Laurie Lee's poem 'Day of these Days' from *Bloom of Candles.*

MESSRS. MACMILLAN for two poems by Edith Sitwell, 'Eurydice' and 'A Simpleton'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MESSRS. JOHN MURRAY for two poems by John Betjeman, 'A Subaltern's Love-Song' from his *Selected Poems* and 'The Old Liberals' from a forthcoming volume.

MESSRS. ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL for 'An Early Death', a poem by Sidney Keyes from his *Collected Poems*.

MESSRS. SECKER & WARBURG for the poem 'Escape' by W. R. Rodgers and Alberto Moravia's short story 'Back from The Sea'.

THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS and MRS. CICELY BINYON for Laurence Binyon's poem 'The Ruins'.

Grateful thanks are also accorded to:

MESSRS. HARCOURT, BRACE (New York) and PARTISAN REVIEW (New York) for Randall Jarrell's 'The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner' and two poems by W. H. Auden, 'Lament for a Lawgiver' and 'Song'.

THE VANGUARD PRESS (New York) for Paul Goodman's 'Iddings Clark'.

NEW DIRECTIONS (New York) for three poems by Dylan Thomas.

LIBRAIRIE GALLIMARD (Paris) for 'Zone Libre' by Louis Aragon, 'Three Poems' by Paul Eluard, 'The Case for Responsible Literature' by J. P. Sartre, and 'La Pomme de Terre' by Francis Ponge.

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colonel found the telephone operator's guest-list for September 1938. The only clue was the blankness of two pages for the twenty-first and twentieth—but I have forgotten the date of Godesberg.

Now I am alone, and a little cold. Everyone seems to have gone to bed. No clock ticks, nothing moves.

It's a very strange adventure, unforgettable of course. The war going to bed after its busy day. The fever of Germany abating after a letting of blood. No feeling of working up to a sudden hysterical armistice.

8 April

Now very deep in Germany. The people look at us more. But what can they think—they who have military things so close to their hearts? Do they think it fantastic that we have come so far over 3,000 miles of sea, or do they think us amateurs? My guess is they are very impressed. A man cried behind his window as a convoy of huge vehicles bumper-to-bumper crawled by for hours in the dust. 'Non-fraternization' is a good thing for the moment.

ALAN MOOREHEAD

BELSEN

JUST before you get to the main entrance of Belsen concentration camp—or rather the place where the camp used to be before the British burned it down—you come on a farmhouse. I suggested to the others in my party that we should turn in there and eat lunch before—rather than after—we visited the camp.

While the table was being set for us in the dining-room we were interested to know from the farmer what he thought of Belsen. 'I don't know very much about it,' he said. 'Each morning I had to drive up there with a cart full of vegetables—swedes and turnips mostly—and one of the S.S. guards took the horse and cart from me at the gate. After a bit the cart and horse were returned to me and I drove away. I was never allowed inside, and I didn't want to go in anyway. I knew something horrible was going on but I didn't ask about it lest I should find myself inside.'

We finished the meal and drove up to the gate with a special pass which General Dempsey had given the correspondents: from the first Dempsey was very keen that we should see Belsen and write about it. Although the British had only captured the place from the Germans a few days before they seemed to have things well organized. Hungarian guards were still spaced along the barbed wire fence, good-looking men who jumped eagerly to attention when an army vehicle came by. At the gate British soldiers were on guard. There were notices in English: 'Danger Typhus', 'Car Park', 'Powder Room', 'Inquiries' and so on.

A young army doctor and a captain from the Pioneers were in charge. The Captain's job was supervising the counting and burial of bodies. Possibly as a form of immunization from the grisly work he appeared to be in particularly jovial spirits.

'I love doing this,' he said, picking up the metal syringe filled with anti-louse powder. 'Come on.'

A squirt up each sleeve. One down the trousers. Two more squirts down the back and front of the shirt and a final shot on the hair. It was rather pleasant.

'We collected the local burgomeisters from the surrounding villages this morning and took them round the camp,' the doctor said.

'How did they take it?'

'One of them was sick and another one wouldn't look. They all said they had never dreamed that this was going on.'

We were now walking down the main driveway towards the first of the huts and administrative buildings. There were large crowds of civilian prisoners about, both those who strolled about in groups talking many different languages and those who sat silent on the ground. In addition there were many forms lying on the earth partly covered in rags, but it was not possible to say whether they were alive or dead or simply in the process of dying. It would be a day or two before the doctors got around to them for a diagnosis.

'There's quite a different air about the place in the last two days,' the doctor said. 'They seem much more cheerful now.'

'And the burial rate has gone down considerably,' the captain added. 'I'm handling just under three hundred a day now. It was five hundred to start with. And we are evacuating five hundred every day to the Panzer training school. It has been made into a hospital. Would you like to see the S.S. boys?'

We saw the women guards first. A British sergeant threw open the cell door and some twenty women wearing dirty grey skirts and tunics were sitting and lying on the floor.

'Get up,' the sergeant roared in English.

They got up and stood to attention in a semi-circle round the room, and we looked at them. Thin ones, fat ones, scraggy ones and muscular ones; all of them ugly, and one or two of them distinctly cretinous. I pointed out one, a big woman with bright golden hair and a bright pink complexion.

'She was Kramer's girl friend,' the sergeant growled. 'Nice lot, aren't they?'

There was another woman in a second room with almost delicate features, but she had the same set staring look in her eyes. The atmosphere of the reformatory school and the prison was inescapable.

Outside in the passageway there was a large blackboard ruled off in squares with white lines. Down the left-hand side of the board was a list of nationalities—'Poles, Dutch, Russians' and so on. Spaced along the top of the board was a list of religions and political faiths—'Communist, Jew, Atheist'. From the board one might have seen at a glance just how many prisoners were in the camp from each nation, and how they were subdivided politically and religiously. However, most of the numbers appeared to have been rubbed off, and it was difficult to make out the totals exactly. Germans seemed to make up the majority of the prisoners. After them Russians and Poles. A great many were Jews. As far as one could decipher there had been half a dozen British here, one or two Americans. There had been something like fifty thousand prisoners altogether.

As we approached the cells of the S.S. guards the sergeant's language became ferocious.

'We have had an interrogation this morning,' the captain said. 'I'm afraid they are not a pretty sight.'

'Who does the interrogation?'

'A Frenchman. I believe he was sent up here specially from the French underground to do the job.'

The sergeant unbolted the first door and flung it back with a crack like thunder. He strode into the cell, jabbing a metal spike in front of him.

'Get up,' he shouted. 'Get up. Get up, you dirty bastards.' There were half a dozen men lying or half lying on the floor. One or two

were able to pull themselves erect at once. The man nearest me, his shirt and face spattered with blood, made two attempts before he got on to his knees and then gradually on to his feet. He stood with his arms half stretched out in front of him, trembling violently.

'Get up,' shouted the sergeant. They were all on their feet now, but supporting themselves against the wall.

'Get away from that wall.'

They pushed themselves out into space and stood there swaying. Unlike the women they looked not at us, but vacantly in front, staring at nothing.

Same thing in the next cell and the next where the men who were bleeding and were dirty were moaning something in German.

'You had better see the doctor,' the Captain said. 'He's a nice specimen. He invented some of the tortures here. He had one trick of injecting creosote and petrol into the prisoner's veins. He used to go around the huts and say "Too many people in here. Far too many." Then he used to loose off the barrel of his revolver round the hut. The doctor has just finished his interrogation.'

The doctor had a cell to himself.

'Come on. Get up,' the sergeant shouted. The man was lying in his blood on the floor, a massive figure with a heavy head and bedraggled beard. He placed his two arms on to the seat of a wooden chair, gave himself a heave and got half upright. One more heave and he was on his feet. He flung wide his arms towards us.

'Why don't you kill me?' he whispered. 'Why don't you kill me? I can't stand any more.'

The same phrases dribbled out of his lips over and over again.

'He's been saying that all morning, the dirty bastard,' the sergeant said. We went out into the sunshine. A number of other British soldiers were standing about, all with the same hard, rigid expressions on their faces, just ordinary English soldiers, but changed by this expression of genuine and permanent anger.

The crowds of men and women thickened as we went further into the camp. The litter of paper and rags and human offal grew thicker, the smell less and less bearable. At the entrance soldiers were unloading trucks filled with wooden latrines but these had not yet been placed about the camp, so many hundreds of half-naked men and women were squatting together in the open, a scene such as you sometimes see in India—except that here it was not always possible

to distinguish men from women and indeed to determine whether or not they were human at all.

We drove through the filth in cars and presently emerging on to an open space of yellow clayey soil we came on a group of German guards flinging bodies into a pit about a hundred feet square. They brought the bodies up in handcarts and as they were flung into the grave a British soldier kept a tally of the numbers. When the total reached five hundred a bulldozer driven by another soldier came up and started nudging the earth into the grave. There was a curious pearly colour about the piled up bodies and they were small like the bodies of children. The withered skin was sagging over the bones and all the normal features by which you know a human being had practically disappeared. Having no stomach for this sort of thing I was only able to look for a second or two, but the S.S. guards and even the British soldiers there appeared to have grown used to the presence of death and able to work in its presence without being sick.

'The doctors are doing a wonderful job,' the Captain said: 'They are in the huts all day sorting out the living bodies from the dead, and it's not easy sometimes to tell the difference. Of course there are a lot who are just hopeless and they are simply left. But they are saving a lot now. We have got in all the food we want—two meals a day at 10 and 6. Come on and have a look at one of the huts. We will go to the women first.'

It was a single storey rectangular building, I suppose about a hundred feet long. Wooden bunks ran in tiers up to the ceiling and there was a narrow passage just wide enough to allow you to pass through. Since the majority of the women there were too weak to move and had no attention whatever, the stench was nauseating. Hurrying through, handkerchief to nose, one saw nothing but livid straining faces and emaciated arms and legs under the filthy bedclothes on either side. Many were using their last strength to moan feebly for help. These animals were piled one on top of the other to the ceiling, sometimes two to a bunk.

An old hag, somewhat stronger than the others, was standing at the further door. 'I'm twenty-one,' she whispered. 'No, I don't know why they put me in here. My husband is a doctor at the front —I'm German but not Jewish. I said that I did not want to enlist in the women's organization and they put me in here. That was eighteen months ago.'

'I've had enough of this,' I said to the Captain.

'Come on,' he said. 'You've got to go through one of the men's huts yet. That's what you're here for.'

It was, if anything, more rancid than the one I had seen, but this time I was too sick with the stench to notice much except the sound of the voices: 'Doctor, Doctor'.

As we returned towards the entrance the people around us were noticeably better in health than those at the pits and the huts. As they were able to walk some instinct drew the people away from the charnel houses and up and out towards the entrance and the ordinary sane normal world outside. It was all like a journey down to some Dantesque pit, unreal, leprous and frightening. And now that one emerged into the light again, one's first coherent reactions were not of disgust or anger or even, I think, of pity. Something else filled the mind, a frantic desire to ask: 'Why? Why? Why? Why had it happened?' With all one's soul one felt: 'This is not war. Nor is it anything to do with here and now, with this one place at this one moment. This is timeless and the whole world and all mankind is involved in it. This touches me and I am responsible. Why has it happened. How did we let it happen?'

We stood there in a group, a major from the commandos, a padre, three or four correspondents, having at first nothing to say and then gradually and quietly asking one another the unspoken question.

Was it sadism? No, on the whole, not. Or, if it was sadism, then it was sadism of a very indirect and unusual kind. Relatively little torture was carried out at this camp. The sadist presumably likes to make some direct immediate act which inflicts pain on other people. He could not obtain much satisfaction from the slow long process of seeing people starve.

Then again the Germans were an efficient people. They needed manpower. Can one imagine anything more inefficient than letting all this valuable labour go to rot? The prisoners in Belsen were not even obliged to work. They were simply dumped in here and left to make what shift they could with a twice daily diet of turnip stew. Incidentally this lack of work probably led to the break-up of the prisoners' morale as much as anything.

The Germans, too, had a normal fear of disease spreading among themselves. And yet they let these thousands of bodies lie on the ground. It's true that there was not a great deal of typhus in the

camp, but it had already broken out when the German commanders approached the British and offered to cede the camp under the terms of a truce.

It was not torture which had killed the prisoners. It was neglect. The sheer indifference of the Nazis. One began to see that the most terrible thing on earth is not positive destruction nor the perverse desire to hurt and destroy. The worst thing that can happen to you is for the master to say: 'I do not care about you any more. I am indifferent.' Whether you washed or ate or laughed or died—none of this was of any consequence any more because you as a person had no value. You were a slug on the ground, to be crushed or not to be crushed, it made no difference.

And having become attuned and accustomed to this indifference the guards were increasingly less affected by the suffering of the people around them. It was accepted that they should die. They were Russians. Russians die. Jews die. They were not even enemies. They were disease. Could you mourn or sympathize with the death throes of a germ?

Now here is where the evidence of Kramer, the camp commandant, comes in. To consider Kramer calmly I think we have first got to rid ourselves temporarily of our memory of that published picture of him shuffling across the yard in shackles. And we have to forget for a moment the title he was given through the world, 'The Monster of Belsen'. A friend of mine, a trained intelligence officer and interrogator in the British army, went into the whole question very carefully with Kramer and this was Kramer's statement:

'I was swamped. The camp was not really inefficient before you crossed the Rhine. There was running water, regular meals of a kind —I had to accept what food I was given for the camp and distribute it the best way I could. But then they suddenly began to send me trainloads of new prisoners from all over Germany. It was impossible to cope with them. I appealed for more staff, more food. I was told this was impossible; I had to carry on with what I had. Then as a last straw the Allies bombed the electric plant which pumped our water. Cartloads of food were unable to reach the camp because of the Allied fighters. Then things really got out of hand. In the last six weeks I have been helpless. I did not even have sufficient staff to bury the dead, let alone segregate the sick.'

Thus Kramer.

'But how did you come to accept a job like this?' he was asked. The reply: 'There was no question of my accepting it. I was ordered. I am an officer in the S.S. and I obey orders. These people were criminals and I was serving my Führer in a crisis by commanding this camp. I tried to get medicines and food for the prisoners and I failed. I was swamped. I may have been hated, but I was doing my duty.'

There was some truth in this last. Not only were the prisoners fond of hurling missiles at Kramer since we arrived, but his own guards turned on him as well. Kramer asked the British authorities that he should be segregated. He was told that in this event he would have to be shackled and to this he agreed.

Who then was responsible for Belsen and, for that matter, all the other camps? The S.S. guards? They say they were ordered. They hated the work but disobedience to Kramer meant death. Kramer says he was in precisely the same position. And so presumably do all the other Kramers above him until you reach Himmler. What does Himmler say? Himmler says he is serving his Führer. The Führer, of course, was innocent and knew nothing about the vulgar details (quite a number of Germans assured us of that). But—we can imagine Himmler saying—it was vital to protect the Führer from his enemies inside the Reich—the Jewish Bolsheviks who would have cheerfully murdered him. At this dire crisis for Germany and the Party one could not be too nice about the details—possibly some people were treated a little too harshly. But one could not afford to take chances. The Nazis were perfectly prepared to treat these prisoners with humanity, but the enemies of Germany made this impossible. They destroyed communications, they blocked the food supply. Naturally the camps suffered.

But the people of Germany? Why had they allowed this thing to be? Why had they not protested? The average German answers: in the first place we did not know these camps existed. Secondly, how could we have protested? What possibly could we have done? The Nazis were too strong.

Very well then, why did you not protest when the Nazis were rising to power?

They answer: How could we foretell that the Nazis would end with this horror? When they first came to power they embarked on a programme that was excellent for Germany: new roads,

modern buildings and machines. It seemed rational and good at the beginning. When we realized that Hitler was turning to war it was already too late. By then the Nazis had claimed our children. They were Nazified in the schools. A parent would be denounced by his own child if he spoke against the Nazis. Little by little we were overwhelmed and in the end it was too late. There was no point at which we could have effectively protested. Why did not foreign countries which had the power check the Nazis soon enough? If only you had attacked us before the Nazis became too strong.

And so the blame is thrown back upon the world. No one anywhere is willing to take responsibility. Not the guard or the torturer. Not Kramer. Not Herr Woolf.[1] They were all ordered. Not Himmler or Hitler (the end justified the means); they were fighting to rid the world of the terrible menace of Jewish Bolshevism—they were ordered by their high sense of duty. Not the German people. They too had to obey. And finally not the world. Is England Germany's keeper?

That is the line of argument which we have heard as observers of this final eclipse of Germany. I write it here not because I accept or reject it, but because we are still too close to the scene to do much more than report personally and directly; and it seems a pity to give way to the downright childishness of saying that all Germans are natural black-hearted fiends capable of murdering and torturing and starving people at the drop of the hat.

If I were compelled to make some sort of direct line at this moment I would say—Yes, all mankind *is* in some way responsible for Belsen but in varying degrees. Herr Woolf, for example, is a cultured European. Surely he could have seen a little more clearly than, say, the average German workman, what the Nazi party was going to mean and have made some protest in time. Clearly, too, the Germans generally and the leading Nazis most particularly are far more embroiled in this monstrosity than anyone else. The Junkers and the Wehrmacht power-through-war class—they too are utterly compromised. But the degree of guilt varies enormously both inside and outside of the Nazi Party, inside and outside of Germany. Probably the least of all to blame is the unpolitical boy who was put into uniform and forced to come here into the German battlefield to support the tardy conscience of the world. And die for it.

[1]The German arms manufacturer whose opinions are paraphrased above.

There is only one thing possible that one can do for him now—be vigilant to snap the long chains that lead to the future Belsens before they grow too strong. A shudder of horror went round the world when the news of these concentration camps was published, but only, I think, because of the special interest and the special moment in the war. We were engrossed with Germany and it is perhaps not too subtle to say that since Germany was manifestly beaten, people wanted to have a justification for their fight, a proof that they were engaged against evil. From the German point of view Belsen was perfectly mistimed. Worse camps like Ausschwitz existed in Poland and we took no notice. Dachau was described in the late thirties and we did not want to hear. In the midst of the war three quarters of a million Indians starved in Bengal because shipping was wanted in other parts and we were bored.

The last living patient has been evacuated from Belsen. The hateful buildings have been burned down. The physical evidence of all those horrible places will soon have been wiped out. Only the mental danger remains. The danger of indifference.

FRANÇOIS LACHEVAL

LAST DAYS OF BERLIN

ON ARRIVING in Berlin, it was the indifference of the masses in the presence of catastrophe which struck you. They went about their business, did their shopping amidst mountains of ruins, made their way along pavements obstructed with bricks and mud, as if nothing had happened. In a building with a gaping façade you might find, on the fourth floor, but facing on to the back yard, a flat where gas, telephone and electricity were intact. This was quite a common occurrence. I have spent some of the most comfortable hours of my life in the one remaining room where lived, ate and slept the owners of one of the most beautiful houses in the Kurfurstrasse. Wooden arrows guided you from the street through the débris which littered the square. Most of the pictures were stored, under State protection, somewhere in a disused Silesian mine, but an interest in Matisse and Picasso remained alive, and a taste for English

THE GOLDEN HORIZON

Cyril Connolly

WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON